
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: WORKING DRAFT OF THE PUBLIC AGENDA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
DATE 10/18/01
CC: RENICK

This memo will summarize AGB's working draft of the Public Agenda for Higher Education. According to Rich Novak, the draft will be sent to the entire Steering Committee next Wednesday for their review prior to the Steering Committee meeting on Monday, October 29. The draft consists of an executive summary, overview, vision, six priorities and accompanying initiatives to accomplish each of the priorities, and a section entitled "Leadership for Change."

You have seen earlier drafts of the executive summary, the overview and the vision. There are no significant changes in the working draft. The vision does present the following "barriers and challenges that could hinder achievement of the vision:"

- There is a need for better understanding among groups and races. A place-bound mentality can hinder personal and public policy choices – and statewide progress.
- Too often fear of change, lack of aspirations and motivation for education or a better job hinders individuals' progress. To change will require transformational thinking and doing some things differently.
- The state sometimes suffers from feelings of inferiority, fueled in some instances by a lack of adequate and consistent resources.
- Education too often operates in separate silos, each with their own entrenched bureaucracy and is too often unable to address the state's challenges timely and adequately.

You and Mr. Patterson shared the six priorities with the private sector Steering Committee members at the lunch at the mansion. Benchmarks for accomplishing each of these priorities will be finalized at the meeting. The priorities, and initiatives for accomplishing each, are as follows:

Priority One: Mississippi's children, their parents, educators, and the state's communities, will embrace higher educational aspirations as the path to a better future. (P. 10)

Initiative 1: Build public awareness through a broad public campaign.

The education coordinating entity (Priority 6) is to take the lead on this priority.

Priority Two: All of Mississippi's children will start school ready to learn. (P. 12)

Initiative 2: Mississippi should help expand and improve pre-kindergarten programs for children in all areas of the state.

The Department of Education is to take the lead on this priority.

Priority Three: Mississippi will substantially boost the quality of teaching and learning in all elementary and secondary schools to better prepare more graduates who are ready to compete in the new economy. (P. 14)

Initiative 3A: Enhance university/college and school partnerships.

Initiative 3B: Develop a broad school-based strategic research plan.

Initiative 3C: Boost Advanced Placement course offerings.

Initiative 3D: Educate better teachers – and work to retain them.

Rich will solicit the Steering Committee’s input as to what entity should take the lead on this priority.

Priority Four: Mississippi will increase high school graduation rates and college participation and graduation rates at all schools, colleges and universities. (P. 17)

Initiative 4A: Promote the college core curriculum.

Initiative 4B: Raise the participation and graduation rates in two and four-year colleges and universities, especially among first generation college students and African American students

Initiative 4C: Raise the number of college graduates in critical career fields of science, math, computer science and engineering, but continue to cultivate graduates who can sustain Mississippi’s culture and successes in the liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences

Initiative 4D: Develop career pathways, linking targeted education and training to work-based high school curricula and postsecondary certificates, associate degrees and transfer to four-year programs

Initiative 4E: Increase part-time enrollment and adult education in community colleges.

The draft states “the workforce needs of the state’s businesses demand that the state change its budget formula to enable Mississippi’s community colleges to serve more part-time students. You’ll remember that the community college presidents discussed this at their lunch with you and are in strong support of this recommendation.

Rich will solicit the Steering Committee’s input as to what entity should take the lead on this priority.

Priority Five: Mississippi will increase its investments in university-based research and development, and the higher education community will redouble its efforts to address state

and community economic needs and prepare students for careers in the new economy. (P. 20)

Initiative 5A: Continue to increase the state's scientific, technical, and research capacity to attract and retain high tech industries in the new economy and reenergize Mississippi's traditional industries

Initiative 5B: Develop proactive partnerships with business and industry that will enable Mississippi colleges and universities to become full partners in economic development.

The IHL Board of Trustees is to take the lead on this priority.

Priority Six: Mississippi's policymakers, educators, and citizens will have the information they need to gauge progress on this public agenda for higher education and to focus resources on unfinished business. (P. 22)

Initiative 6A: Establish an Education Coordinating Entity comprised of the board chairs and chief executives of MDE, SBCJC, IHL and the state's independent colleges and universities.

Initiative 6B: Create a Mississippi Education Progress Board comprised of the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker, House and Senate Education Committee chairs, business leaders and direct customers of the system to annually assess educational progress at all levels.

You and the legislative leadership are to take the lead on this priority.

Rich and I have scheduled a telephone call for 11:00 next Tuesday to discuss the draft and the summit. Please advise as to any concerns or comments you have on the draft that you would like me to share with Rich.

I will be at an NGA Education Advisors' meeting on the 29th, but Shanta will staff you at the Steering Committee meeting and will take notes on the discussions for our files.

Thank you.